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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LAGOS 000095

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STATE FOR AF/W  
STATE FOR INR/AA  
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK  
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR  
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH  
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: STATE OF EMERGENCY BRINGS SOME CALM TO EKITI STATE

REF: 06 LAGOS 1297

LAGOS 00000095 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Although controversial, President Obasanjo's declaration in October 2006 of a state of emergency in Ekiti State has provided citizens a respite from the State's tumultuous political climate. Special Administrator Tunji Olurin has brought some order to Ekiti. However, the party primary season in December was filled with controversy and defections in both major parties, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Action Congress (AC). Indeed, the respite may be nearing the end of its life-span as April elections promise more controversy and possible political violence. End summary.

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Fayose Still in Hiding, but  
His Failures Are Apparent  
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¶2. (U) Poloff visited Ekiti State January 22-23. Ekiti, an agricultural state, has little industrial development. There was no new construction in Ado-Ekiti except for a guest house complex nearing completion. In September 2006, Governor Ayo Fayose's re-election campaign was getting into gear but then the spotlight was shined on his political miscreancy by opponents and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). This catalyzed a chain of fast-moving events which ended his control of the State house in October 2006. With possible criminal charges facing him, Fayose has been on the lam since then. The once-ubiquitous posters and billboards extolling Fayose were almost all gone. Ironically, a large billboard advertising Fayose's infamous 1.2 billion naira (\$9.4 million) chicken farm was still standing. Media focus on the disappearance of the money intended for the chicken farm hotly pursued Fayose during his final year; this became one of the major scandals leading to his descent from high office.

¶3. (C) Chris Fejemifo, Chairman of the Nigerian Union of Journalists and Director of Ekiti State television, could

find no encomiums for his former boss. Ekiti, a state since 1996, lost a great deal under Fayose and his cronies, Fejemifo said. Fayose claimed he improved Ekiti's roads, but Fejemifo pointed out the State paid three times more per kilometer of construction than neighboring states. Even then, the completed roads were poor quality "surface improvements", Fejemifo commented. (Note: Fayose suspended Fejemifo for 16 months for what Fayose saw as negative political commentary on the local Ekiti television station. End note)

¶4. (U) More adept at playing the fugitive than the role for which he was elected, Fayose has been able to stymie further EFCC investigation. In November 2006, the Federal Court in Akure ruled Fayose could not be put on trial because he was still formally a governor and thus constitutionally immune from prosecution, a ruling which the EFCC has been trying to overturn. The police investigating the August 2006 murder of People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate Ayodeji Daramola arrested a Fayose aide, but the investigation has been languishing and there was no certainty anyone will be tried for this homicide.

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Olurin Administration Brings Calm  
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¶5. (C) President Obasanjo chose retired general Adetunji Olurin as Special Administrator for Ekiti State. According to sources, Olurin was planning to run for the same Ogun Central senate seat as President Obasanjo's daughter Iyabo until Obasanjo conveniently appointed Olurin to his current post in Ekiti. According to Fejemifo, Olurin's tenure has improved the situation. Olurin has brought a measure of peace to the state.

LAGOS 00000095 002.2 OF 003

¶6. (C) Olurin had declared January 22-23 a holiday in Ekiti to encourage residents to register to vote. Fejemifo told Poloff that Ekiti residents would not be able to get their salary or be hired unless they could show they had registered with the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC). Given this type of coercion, registration lines understandably were quite long in Ado-Ekiti.

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New Controversy Stalks the PDP  
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¶7. (U) With Fayose discredited, the PDP nominated for governor Segun Oni, the third place finisher in the primary balloting. However, the nomination was plagued with controversy as the top two finishers, Yinka Akerele and Segun Ojo, claimed the right to a run-off election.

¶8. (U) In talking to Poloff and Polspec Ekiti PDP party chairman Ropo Adesanya explained the top two candidates did not meet the criteria for selection as governor. Adesanya pointed out that primary electoral guideline 48(f) of the PDP constitution allows the national committee to select a gubernatorial candidate. The mistake of Akerele and Ojo was to believe the primary vote was the only test, Adesanya explained. The purpose of the primary was to weed out some candidates, not to definitively select one of them, Adesanya asserted. Any candidate must also receive favorable intelligence reports and security reports from the police and the Special Security Service (SSS). Adesanya said it was necessary to remove the first two candidates because both had ties to Fayose.

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Party Elders Promoted Candidates  
Without Ties to Fayose  
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¶9. (C) Adesanya bristled when Polspec asked about the influence of ten elders in the Ekiti PDP. There were no "So-called elders in charge", Adesanya responded. While the elders tried to influence the PDP, the party consulted the elders but did not allow them to select a candidate, Adesanya claimed. (Comment: Adesanya was an ally of Fayose who helped engineer Fayose's election in 2003. In fact, the elders traveled to Abuja and complained the Ekiti PDP was trying to swing the nomination toward two Fayose cronies, who would presumably protect the former Governor from future prosecution. End comment)

¶10. (C) However, according to Fejemifo, Oni captured the nomination largely because of the influence of President Obasanjo's senior private attorney, Afe Babashola. A bitter Fayose opponent, Babashola and party leaders friendly to him reportedly convinced Obasanjo that Akerele's and Ojo's close association with Fayose made them poor choices for the PDP.

¶11. (C) Oni, on the other hand, was not allied with Fayose. He was a member of the E-11 group, a group of Ekiti professionals that included Action Congress (AC) gubernatorial candidate Kayode Fayemi and attorney and 2003 gubernatorial candidate Femi Falana. This group of Ekiti professionals has become a growing force in local politics. Falana was a supporter of PM News, which published stories detailing the corrupt dealings and mismanagement of the Fayose administration. A friend of EFCC Chairman Ribadu, Falana gave the EFCC information instrumental to its downing of Fayose.

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Opposition: Fayose Will be an Issue in the Campaign  
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¶12. (C) Encouraged by the turmoil in the PDP, 14 candidates competed for the AC nomination, which Kayode Fayemi won. Ekiti AC Chairman Awe told Poloff Fayemi won the most wards, and Awe was confident that momentum was on the AC's side. However, some reports indicated Fayemi did not win the most

LAGOS 00000095 003.2 OF 003

votes, but rather received the nod because he was the favorite of Lagos Governor Bola Tinubu and the AC hierarchy. Following the primaries, 12 AC candidates defected to the PDP.

¶13. (C) Despite the PDP's and Obasanjo's attempts to disown the former Governor, a vengeful AC planned to use Fayose's failed tenure to win support. According to Awe, the PDP failed to rule because of leadership problems. Awe pointed out that Fayose's failure led to the removal of the entire leadership in Ekiti.

¶14. (C) However, some observers saw other possible winners besides Fayemi. Musa Ayeni, who served as Ondo State Deputy Governor in 1992, secured the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) nomination. After a relatively easy primary, Fejemifo believed Ayeni has the hearts and minds of many people and has a chance to win outright provided the contest is a fair one.

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Comment  
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¶15. (C) In the murky world of Ekiti politics, few things are certain besides more intrigue. With nowhere else to go, Fayose's allies will likely remain in the PDP. Additionally, with State Administrator Olurin being a de facto PDP incumbent, the PDP retains the inside track as the election nears. However, significant popular sentiment rests with the opposition. Many believe the Fayose debacle should disbar the PDP from another chance in Ekiti. With both sides sensing a chance at victory, neither will be in the mood to back down for the other. Political violence and intimidation will likely come into play. In this case, Olurin's role as Ekiti Administrator will be critical in whether Ekiti

electoral terrain is generally level or skewed in favor of the PDP. End comment.

BROWNE